

16
CPYRGHT

"THE MOST QUIET AMERICAN" -- Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 8 December 1966

[This is a translation of an article by V. BOL'SHAKOV, published in Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 8 December 1966.]

Six automobiles -- long limousines with shades drawn over their dark windows -- are being driven at high speed on the highway from Los Angeles, their brakes screaming at the sharp curves. After crossing a pass, the lights of Burbank appear in the valley. Somewhere down there, the conveyor belts of Lockheed aircraft plants are constantly on the move.

Several miles before reaching Burbank, the mysterious cavalcade of cars turns off the highway and soon the limousines stop at a barrier bearing the sign "Private road. No trespassers allowed." There is a check of documents, and 15 minutes later another barrier, behind which is a tall iron gate with the sign "Property of Lockheed Corporation." A stout little man in an old-fashioned, baggy suit approaches the limousines and gets into the first car. The cavalcade moves on across an airfield and soon stops in front a low hanger, inside of which a dim light is barely noticeable.

Together with "Shorty" -- who is the chief designer of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Clarence (Kelly) Johnson, -- a tall man gets out of the first car; he holds himself erect like a telephone pole and his hat is pulled down low over his forehead. "So this is your 'burrow', Kelly?" he asks.

"Yes, Dick. This is the 'Polecat's (Ferret's) Burrow'." [or "Skunk's"!]

"Well, lets see what kind of an odor your burrow has, Kelly."

Inside the hanger, in the bluish light of neon lamps, stood a low, narrow-winged plane, painted black.

This was in January 1955. On that day, in the supersecret laboratory of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Kelly Johnson demonstrated his creation -- the U-2 spy plane -- to Richard Helms, Deputy Director for Planning of the CIA.

Eleven years have gone by since then. Quite a number of "black" birds have come out of this "burrow." And Richard Helms, who made his career with the help of these "birds", became at first the chief of the Planning Department, and in June of this year -- director of CIA.